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JAN 16 2007

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending in the application. Independent claims 1 and 16 have been amended by the present amendment. The amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed.

As amended, independent claims 1 and 16 recite a printing apparatus and a printing method, respectively, in which password-attached print jobs are stored in a queue with a print hold status, and the print hold status is released when the passwords are entered, such that the printing of the print jobs is executed in order of entry of the passwords (see, e.g., specification at page 19, line 21 to page 20, line 6). The above claimed features are also incorporated into the other independent claims.

Independent claim 16 was rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. Claim 16 has been amended to reorder the steps, and thus recite steps of: holding the first and second/ subsequent password-attached print jobs in a queue; verifying that the entered password is a valid password for the second/subsequent password-attached print job, during printing of the first password-attached print job; and printing the second/subsequent password-attached print job. It is believed that the amendment to claim 16 obviates the rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-7, 9-16, 18, 19, and 24 were rejected under 35 USC 102(c) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,058,249 to Matsuda et al. ("Matsuda"). Claims 8, 17, and 20-22 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda in view of U.S. Patent 6,567,180 to Kageyama et al. ("Kageyama"). Claim 23 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda in view of Kageyama, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,956,471 to Ueda et al. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The independent claims incorporate the subject matter indicated as being allowable over Matsuda (see page 23 of Office Action of 10/16/2006):

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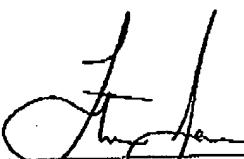
after the password for the first password protected print job and the password of the second password protected print job are entered, the first password protected print job and the second password protected print job are held in a queue prior to printing the first password protected print job and the second password protected print job; the order of printing the first password protected print job and the second password protected print job are printed in the order of entering the passwords for the first password protected print job and the second password protected print job.

Matsuda does not teach or suggest a printing apparatus or a printing method including (1) setting a print hold status by transmitting a password-attached print job, (2) releasing the print hold status by entering a password, and (3) printing a plurality of password-attached print jobs in order of entry of the passwords.

For at least the reasons discussed above, the Matsuda reference does not anticipate or otherwise render obvious the Applicant's claimed invention. Therefore, independent claims 1, 15-19, 22, and 24 and their respective dependent claims are patentable over Matsuda.

It is believed that the claims are in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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